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AUTHOR	Morphew, Christopher C.
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ABSTRACT

This study explored the institutional characteristics associated with the conversion from college to university status. Since 1990, more than 120 public and private four-year colleges have changed their names and become universities. Of these, 105 were considered for this study. The first hypothesis, that less selective institutions were more likely to change, was studied through information about selectivity in a well-known college guidebook. A second hypothesis, that relatively resource poor institutions would be more likely to change, was studied through data from the Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS). The final hypothesis, that institutions changed their names to acknowledge the reality that they were already more graduate-intensive than their peer schools, was tested by comparing numbers of graduate students and graduate credit hours through IPEDS data. Study findings suggest that less selective schools were more likely to change. There was also strong evidence that institutional resources played the hypothesized negative role in predicting whether or not an institution will change status. There was also evidence, although not as strong as for the other hypotheses, that a focus on graduate education was positively correlated with the change to university status. (Contains 4 tables and 54 references.) (SLD)

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A Rose by Any Other Name: Explaining Why Colleges Become Universities

Christopher C. Morphew
University of Kansas
202 Bailey Hall
Teaching and Leadership
University of Kansas
785.864.9845, office
520.244.2577, fax
morphew@ku.edu

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Since 1990, more than 120 public and private four-year colleges have changed their names and become universities. Together, these institutions represent nearly 5% of all four-year postsecondary institutions, so the conversion of these institutions from colleges to universities represents a significant trend in higher education. Yet this seachange in higher education has been overlooked by higher education researchers, perhaps because many in the higher education community see these changes as merely cosmetic rather than substantive. As a result, we know little about the institutions undergoing this transformation and what charateristics they might share. This study explores what institutional characteristics are associated with the conversion from college to university status. Conceptually, the study utilizes two different theoretical frameworks (institutional theory and resource dependence theory) and a third alternate hypothesis (colleges become universities to better reflect their increased comprehensive nature) to identify characteristics that might be associated with institutions that have chosen to change their names from college to university.

The number of former colleges that have become universities since 1990 suggests a real trend that will directly impact the institutional diversity of our state and national higher education systems. In fact, this trend is indicative of an emerging higher education market that researchers have claimed will change the landscape of higher education (Gumport, 1997). The trend whereby institutions move away from the liberal arts college model to the more comprehensive university model may indicate that colleges are adapting to new higher education markets. While this type of organizational change or adaptation is not necessarily detrimental to the quality of higher education offerings, it

deserves further empirical study because it will impact the institutional diversity of our higher education system(s) and the types of postsecondary options available to tomorrow's students.

Institutional diversity in higher education

Research on institutional diversity has been driven by the premise that one of the primary strengths of the U.S. higher education system is its diversity of institutional types (Birnbaum, 1983). In no other system can we find the diversity of unique types of higher education institutions that seem so plentiful in the U.S.: women's colleges, research universities, comprehensive universities, liberal arts colleges, proprietary colleges, and community colleges all co-exist in our system and, more importantly, provide complementary opportunities for students with unique needs. Indeed, research has shown that women's colleges (Astin, 1977; Wolf-Wendel, 1998; Whitt, 1994), historically black colleges and universities (Allen, 1992; Wolf-Wendel, Baker & Morphew, 2000), and liberal arts colleges (Clark, 1978) serve specific groups of students extraordinarily well. These institutions provide nurturing and developmentally appropriate environments for students who might otherwise attend more comprehensive institutions where they might be less likely to succeed and graduate.

The existence of postsecondary institutions with unique and differentiated missions serves states' needs by improving efficiency and effectiveness — goals that are becoming more important in the current era of scarce resources. Multiple types of public (and private) postsecondary institutions within a state, including large and small colleges and universities as well as special focus colleges, provide a diverse set of educational opportunities for students. States with diverse higher education systems can improve the

chances that a) students will be able to pursue higher education in the most appropriate environment; b) their large comprehensive universities will continue to meet their economic and research needs; and c) in-state students will stay in the state for college and increase odds that these students will remain in the state as productive, tax-paying citizens after graduation (Stadtman, 1980).

There is evidence, however, that the diversity of postsecondary institutional types in the U.S. has decreased over time and continues to decrease. For example, higher education researchers (e.g., Birnbaum, 1983; Schultz & Stickler, 1965; Aldersley, 1995) have noted several trends during the past thirty years that appear to have negatively affected the diversity of higher education institutions. Indeed, several distinct institutional types (e.g., men's colleges, private two-year colleges) have nearly become extinct as colleges have changed or expanded their missions. Unfortunately, ss colleges and universities have expanded their programmatic offerings, researchers have argued that these institutions' traditional missions and even some of their students have been ignored or underserved (Lachs, 1965; McConnell, 1962; Shils, 1962-63; Morphew, 2000).

This study builds upon the foundation provided by earlier research on institutional diversity. Working from the premise that institutional diversity is a valuable and a particularly significant part of the U.S. higher education model, the study attempts to identify the characteristics associated with institutions that have changed their names from college to university and likely changed their institutional mission. In the process, several hypotheses that might explain why colleges choose this transformative process are explored.

Conceptual framework – study hypotheses

There are several propositions that can be constructed to explain why colleges transform themselves into universities. Each of these propositions is constructed from and connected to a broader conceptual framework. Below, three propositions are discussed and connected to a framework. Each is later tested by empirical data.

P1: Colleges become universities to seem more legitimate to the external environment

The proposition that colleges become universities to attain greater legitimacy is tied to institutional theory and its claim that some types of organizations must adopt specific symbols, forms, and practices in order to be seen as legitimate by important external constituents. For higher education institutions, offices like the Dean of Students and rituals like graduation ceremonies, as well as practices like accreditation are examples of the ways in which normative forms, practices and symbols permeate our environment. Institutional theorists argue that organizations in fields like education risk being seen as less legitimate if they stray too far from the normative organizational model in their field (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977). From this institutional perspective, the transformation from college to university might be viewed as an attempt to adopt the trappings of a high status organizational form.

The incorporation of the university name and corresponding structures and practices would help a lower status institution to send a message of legitimacy to important external constituents, particularly students: i.e., "we are just like other universities." In effect, the change from college to university would signify the adoption of an "institutionally conforming structure" that would lead to greater "community understanding" of the organization's legitimacy (Meyer, Scott & Deal, 1981, p. 47). This

symbolism is illustrated in the statements accompanying news releases proclaiming the name change. For example, the president of the Rowan University (Rowan College until 1997) stated, "When you say 'college,' a lot of people attribute that to a relatively small, limited type of institution....For better or worse, the university designation conjures up in people's minds a much more extensive academic program" (Lively, 1997, p. A33). Or, as the chair of faculty senate at Quinnipiac University (Quinnipiac College until June 2000) put it,

> Quinnipiac had very solid academic programs, especially in business and health, but it was not marketed well. We were not too well-known outside of Connecticut....By changing the name to Quinnipiac university, we're telling the world we not longer are a little tiny college.

It is not necessarily true that universities are more successful or prestigious than colleges, of course. The most selective liberal arts colleges today are viewed as quite prestigious and are, by almost any measure, very successful organizations. Yet, the statements above by leaders of colleges making the transition to university make clear the fact that, for some institutions, becoming a university is part of a larger attempt be viewed by external constituents as more successful and more legitimate.

Institutional theory can help us to understand why lower status colleges might change their name to university. This adoption of a normative form – and the structures and practices that accompany it – is particularly important for organizations that must strive to show that they resemble their more successful, higher status peers. From this perspective, it can be argued that an educational organization "succeeds if everyone agrees it is a school; it fails if no one believes that it is a school, regardless of its success in instruction or socialization" (Meyer, Scott and Deal, 1981, p. 56).

Observers of the isomorphic tendencies within the U.S. higher education system have argued that colleges and universities are becoming more alike in a competitive cycle whereby increased prestige is the goal. For example, Aldersley (1995), after describing the trend toward the adoption of graduate education and research reflected in the 1994 Carnegie re-classification that resulted in 20% more Research Universities since 1987, argues that this data shows that "ambitious institutions are apparently still beguiled by the promise of prestige associated with doctoral level-education" (p. 56). Aldersley's discussion of this trend mirrors the thoughts of institutional theorists: institutions pursue graduate education and as a "higher" Carnegie Classification not to serve any need that might be present (though that might occur as a result), but to adopt the practices and structures of those universities perceived as being most prestigious or highest status. This measure of the trend is shared by others in higher education who argue that changing from college to university status helps institutions to distinguish themselves in a competitive environment or move up "the ladder of prestige" (Lively, 1997, A33).

P2: Colleges become universities to secure important, tangible resources

An alternate perspective on this name change trend would also emphasize the higher education environment, but would focus on the tangible resources that colleges might attract by becoming universities. Resource dependence theory would explain an institution's conversion from a college to a university by exploring whether this behavior could be linked to an organization's attempt to secure continued or increased access to tangible resources (e.g., operating funds, endowments funds, research funds, etc.) that the organization requires (Tolbert, 1985; Pffer & Salancik, 1978). Indeed, presidents of institutions that have recently changed their names from college to university argue that

increased attention and resources will result from the name change (Lively, 1997). Or, as the president of Briar Cliff College (Briar Cliff University as of September 2001) argued: "You're not well-known unless you're Harvard, Yale or Princeton. But people are going to look at what you are offering them [when you're a university]..." (Weeder, 2000).

Mission statements are an example of higher education institutions' attempts to secure important resources. Colleges and universities have often been accused of constructing deliberately ambiguous mission statements, but these comprehensive statements serve a purpose for these institutions. They serve as a reminder that colleges and universities have diverse, differentiated goals that may sometimes conflict with one another (Davies, 1986). Critics of higher education mission statements have pointed out that these documents leave no door closed, no resource declared out of bounds. As a result, these critics argue, mission statements are constructed to be intentionally vague, thereby including everything and precluding no future attempt to acquire new resources (Newsom & Hayes, 1990). The reality is that many colleges and universities are constantly on the lookout for new sources of revenue via distance education, technology transfer, or new degree programs in graduate education. The path toward attracting some of these resources may also include the transition from the more focused mission of a college to the more comprehensive mission of a university. Higher education institutions – like businesses – can signal external stakeholders that substantial organizational changes have been or are being made by doing things like changing their names to reflect their new direction (Koku, 1997).

From this resource dependence perspective then, we would expect colleges and universities to make organizational changes with the knowledge that resources

(particularly important financial resources) might become more available to them as a result of such changes. For example, we would expect that because private colleges and universities are more reliant upon private funding, their structures would reflect this reality. Likewise, we would expect public universities to pay relatively more attention to the planning and accountability demands of their state agencies and to include these realities in their structures and practices. Research by Tolbert (1985) provides support for the notion that higher education institutions' structures conform to the demands and resources of their environments. Her research showed how private universities' development structures were tailored to their environment and differed – as predicted by resource dependence – from those of public universities.

P3: Colleges become universities to better reflect their increased comprehensive nature

It is likely that many colleges have seen themselves transformed into different types of institutions as they changed to serve the new higher education market. This is to be expected given the changes in student population and demands that have occurred since the late 1970s and early 1980s. Gumport et al. (1997) point this out as they examine the trend from massification to what they term "post-massification." They point out that the higher education environment is changing and that the context within which higher education institutions function must reflect the realities of today's higher education market(s), its students and their demands. The implication is that most institutions – those that are not highly selective and without significant endowment resources – must adapt their programs and services to the needs of students of this era. Indeed, if one compares today's students and their needs to earlier groups, the obvious differences become apparent. For example, during the 1990s, the number of non-traditional students

increased at three times the rate of the increase of traditional students. Similarly, post-graduate enrollment, particularly in first professional degree programs rose nearly 10% during the late 1980s and early 1990s (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999).

Given the changes that have occurred during the 1990s and the reality that most higher education institutions must conform – to some degree – to the needs of their users – the notion that colleges have adopted the title "university" to better reflect their current organizational realities must be explored. This final explanation is most similar to the private, internal arguments put forward by representatives of institutions that have recently undergone change. For example, the President of newly-renamed Rockhurst University, in an e-mail to staff and faculty at the institution, explained the Board's recent decision to rename the institution with a description of the way the institution had changed.

> There are many reasons, pro and con, which have been discussed at length on the campus. Principally, the Board decided to make this change in order to more accurately reflect our present reality. Rockhurst has become a more complex institution over the past twenty years. We now have more than 700 graduate students in five graduate programs, and we have four separate schools, each with its own dean. The Board believes calling ourselves Rockhurst University describes us better and will help our recruiting efforts with potential students.

While this e-mail hinted at the notion that the name change would help the university's stature and its recruiting efforts, the main message was simple: the adoption of the name "university" was long overdue and attributable primarily to the reality of the institution's larger graduate program offerings and more comprehensive degree program offerings. This argument is consistent with the historical use of the term "university." The term has traditionally been applied to institutions that have substantial graduate

program offerings as well as an undergraduate division(s). During the 1990s however, many former exclusively undergraduate colleges began to offer graduate programs to attract students and stabilize enrollment patterns. These institutions, having abandoned or expanded upon their former undergraduate education missions, may now wish to adopt the title "university" to better reflect their institution's current mission and attract students who might be interested in their newest program offerings.

Study hypotheses and methods

The purpose of this study was to examine which institutional types were associated with the conversion from college to university, rather than the question of why the conversion was made. So, while the three propositions explored above speak to why colleges might become universities, they will be used here for only the purpose of helping to identify some characteristics that the newly-transformed universities might share. Toward that end, three hypotheses – each linked to one of the earlier propositions – were constructed as a means of determining what kinds of institutional characteristics might be associated with those institutions that changed their names from college to university during the study period.

- H1: Less selective postsecondary institutions were more likely than their peers to change their names from college to university during the study period.
- H2: Postsecondary institutions with relatively fewer resources were more likely than their peers to change their name from college to university during the study period.
- H3: Postsecondary institutions with a relatively stronger focus on graduate education than their peers were more likely to change their names from college to university during the study period.

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H1 is derived from the first proposition and institutional theory propositions that less prestigious organizations are more likely than their peers to adopt the structures and practices of the most dominant organizations in their field. To test this hypothesis, the admissions standards of the institutions that changed from college to university were compared with those of other colleges and universities. The 1990 20th Edition of *Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges* was used to identify whether those institutions that changed their names from college to university were relatively more or less selective in admissions. In 1990, The *Peterson's Guide* classified four-year postsecondary institutions into one of five categories, depending upon the high school class rank and standardized test scores (SAT & ACT) of those admitted.

The second hypothesis (H2) is linked to the resource dependence proposition described earlier (P2). Resource dependence theorists would hypothesize that relatively resource-poor organizations would experience a greater need to change themselves – either structurally or symbolically – as a means of acquiring new resources. To test this hypothesis, the financial resources of institutions that changed their names from college to university were examined and compared to the financial resources of similar institutions that did not change their names. In order to make an appropriate comparison, institutions were compared with only their Carnegie peers. This method allowed the model to differentiate between the effects of prestige and resources, which are often highly correlated. Public institutions were compared with regard to state appropriations per student and instructional expenditures per student. Private institutions were compared with regard to endowment per student and to instructional expenditures per student. The Finance and Institutional Characteristics datasets from IPEDS (Integrated

Postsecondary Data Systems) were used to test hypothesis H2. The per student measures were constructed by using the total number of students (headcount) at each institution and dividing that number into the instructional expenditures, endowment, and state appropriations, respectively.

The final hypothesis (H3) is designed to assess whether institutions that had changed their names from college to university did so to acknowledge the reality that they were already more graduate-intensive than their peers (P2). To test this hypothesis, the institutions were compared with regard to the number of graduate students (headcount) enrolled and the number of graduate credit hours each institution generated. Rather than using these measures independently, however, they were combined into an index by dividing the number of graduate credit hours by the number of graduate students reported for each institution. This method accomplished three things: it eliminated one threat of collinearity as well as providing a standardized measure of an institution's focus on enrolling full-time graduate students. It also allowed for the inclusion and comparison of both large and small institutions, in that it controlled for effects attributable to institutional size. Once again, in order to produce the most appropriate analysis, institutions were compared with their Carnegie Classification peers and privates and publics were examined independently. Data from the IPEDS datasets on fall enrollment were used to test hypothesis H3.

Of the 124 four-year institutions that were identified as having changed their title from college to university during the period between 1989-90 and 1997-98, only 105 were used for this study. The other 19 institutions were not used because either a) they were specialized institutions that awarded a majority of their degrees in a particular

professional or pre-professional field, such as cosmetology or mortuary sciences; or b) data on these institutions could not be located in either *Peterson's* or the IPEDS datasets. For the purposes of this study, these specialized institutions were deemed dissimilar to traditional non-profit four-year colleges and universities offering more comprehensive degree programs.

Table 1. Distribution of institutions by Carnegie Classification – institutions retaining name vs. institutions changing name from college to university between 1989-90 and 1997-98.

Carnegie Classification (1994)	Retaining name	Changing name
Master's I	387	49
Master's II	79	16
Baccalaureate II	427	40
Total	893	101

Table 1 identifies the distribution of institutions used in this study. These institutions were identified via an analysis of IPEDS datasets on institutional characteristics from 1989-90 and 1997-98. These datasets included data on the universe of all postsecondary degree-granting institutions in the U.S.

This study compares those institutions that changed their names from college to university during the study period to the institutions in each of the three Carnegie Classification groups that included "college" as part of their name in 1989-90 and retained that title as of 1997-98. Because of the likelihood that the factors cited in hypotheses H2 and H3 work in concert, a multivariate logistic model was constructed. The model used a dichotomous dependent variable: whether or not an institution changed its name from "college" to "university." Institutions that changed their names were coded as "1" while others were coded "0." Independent variables included in the model

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for private institutions were endowment revenues per student, instructional expenditures per student, Carnegie Classification (Master's I and Master's II Universities were identified and compared to Baccalaureate II Colleges), and graduate credit hours per number of graduate students. Independent variables included in the model for public universities were state appropriations per student, instructional expenditures per student, Carnegie Classification (Master's I and Master's II Universities were identified and compared to Baccalaureate II Colleges), and graduate credit hours per number of graduate students. As mentioned above, the model was tested for multicollinearity.

Study limitations

The study uses a "snapshot" method that compares institutions between two academic years (1989-90 and 1997-98). These two academic years were not chosen for their unique qualities. Rather, they were chosen because of the author's interest in focusing on the 1990s and the fact that the1997-98 data was the most recent available in final version form from the National Center for Education Statistics. Using different comparison points would undoubtedly produce a somewhat different population of institutions, though there is no reason to believe that that population would differ markedly from the sample used in this study.

Study findings

The findings produced for this study can help us to understand what types of institutions chose – strategically, perhaps – to change their identity and seek the tangible and intangible resources that are available to universities rather than colleges. This section of the manuscript will provide a description and brief analysis of the study's findings relative to each of the three hypotheses.

Hypothesis H1

As indicated in Table 1 above, none of the institutions that converted from college to university resided in the Baccalaureate I College category in the 1994 Carnegie Classification. This fact foreshadows the finding that none of those institutions resided in either of the two most selective admissions categories as defined by *Peterson's* in 1990.

Table 2. Distribution of Institutions Converting from College to University 1990-98 by 1990 Peterson's Category.

Selectivity rating	# of Institutions	# of College to University name changes
1. Most difficult	47	0
2. Very difficult	156	0
3. Moderately difficult	1009	61 (6.0 % of institutions from this group)
4. Minimally difficult	279	33 (11.8% of institutions from this group)
5. Noncompetitive	229	11 (4.8% of institutions from this group)

As shown in Table 2 above, nearly two-thirds of the converting institutions resided in the "moderately difficult" category, while none came from the top two selective categories. This findings provides substantial support for H1 and the argument that less selective institutions are much more likely than their peers to change their names from college to university. Beyond this, as a percentage of institutions within their *Peterson's* category, category 3 institutions were less

likely than category 4 institutions and equally as likely as category 5 institutions to change from college to university during the 1990-98 period.

Hypotheses H2 and H3

The multivariate logistic model constructed to test hypotheses H2 and H3 revealed several interesting findings that are illustrated in Tables 2 and 3 below.[1] Several of these findings provide support for the second and their study hypotheses. First, among private institutions, the model (Table 3) showed that – after controlling for Carnegie Classification – endowment resources per student and graduate credit hours per student were significantly associated with the name change outcome. More specifically, as endowment resources per student rose, institutions were less likely to move to university status. Graduate focus, on the other hand, was positively associated with change: as graduate credit hours per graduate student rose, institutions were more likely to move to university status. The model also showed that, when compared with Baccalaureate II Colleges, Master's I Universities were significantly less likely to change from college to university status.

Table 3. Results of multivariate logistic regression with name change from college to university as dichotomous outcome variable (0, 1). Private institutions only.

Independent Variable	**Beta (Significance)**
Endowment income per student	-.0018(*)
Instructional expenditures per student	-.0000
Master's I University	-.4854(**)
Master's II University	-.3220
Graduate credit hours per graduate student	.0435(*)
Constant	-.9135

*p≤.05; **p≤.01 (one-tailed tests)

[1] Readers who note the relatively small beta coefficients of the variables identified as significant predictors in Table 3 and Table 4 should know that these small coefficients are the result of extreme variance in the resources and expenditures across the groups of colleges and universities being studied.

Among public institutions, on the other hand, both instructional expenditures and state appropriations per student were significant predictors of change in the outcome variable. Change in instructional expenditures was negatively associated with change in institutional status. Conversely, greater state appropriations was a negative predictor of the move from college to university status.

Table 4. Results of multivariate logistic regression with name change from college to university as dichotomous outcome variable (0, 1). Public institutions only.

Independent Variable	**Beta (Significance)**
Instructional expenditures per student	-.004(*)
Master's I University	-.1299
Master's II University	-.0479
Graduate credit hours per graduate student	.1448
State appropriations per student	.0002(*)
Constant	-.5412

*p≤.05 (one-tailed tests)

The findings in Tables 1-3 provide substantial support for the hypothese delineated above and, as a result, for the theories that provided the foundation for this study. Simultaneously, the findings are not clear in their indications as to what type of college pursues the change to university status. Particularly interesting are the findings that private Master's I Universities are less likely than private Baccalaureate II Colleges to seek this kind of organizational transformation and that, among public universities, instructional expenditures and state appropriations are oppositional predictors of change. These findings as well as a discussion of the relevance of this study and its outcomes will be discussed in the next section.

What institutional characteristics are associated with the change from college to university?

This study was prompted by the need to know more about the institutional characteristics associated with the change from college to university status. Given the

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number of postsecondary institutions involved in this kind of transformation during the past decade, more information was needed to understand this trend and gauge what kinds of universities were engaged in changing their status. The dearth of research on this topic limited the present study to identifying only institutional characteristics, however, rather than attempting to identify the motivations of specific institutions engaging in this kind of organizational change.

So, while we can only guess at the motivation behind an institution's decision to change its name from college to university, the findings from this study allow for the chance to make substantiated claims about the institutional characteristics associated with this change. Several can be made. First, the findings provide significant support for the argument that selectivity plays an important role in predicting whether or not that institution will move to change its status. Second, there is strong evidence that institutional resources play the hypothesized negative role in predicting whether or not an institution will change status. Finally, there is also evidence – though not as strong as in the first two cases – that a focus on graduate education is positively correlated with the change from college to university status.

What is perhaps more interesting is the meaning of these findings and the questions they present, as well as the findings that were not predicted. There were two unpredicted findings of note. In the first case, as shown in Table 3, private Master's I Universities – even after controlling for institutional resources and graduate credit hours per graduate student – were significantly more likely than Baccalaureate II Colleges to retain their status as colleges. It is likely that this finding can be explained with a nod to the data used for both this study and for the 1994 Carnegie Classification. This study used data

from 1990 – 1998. The 1994 Carnegie Classification used data from 1989 – 1992. As such, the institutions classified as Master's I Universities had achieved a focus on graduate education in the late 1980s or the early 1990s: that is, they already conferred at least 40 degrees annually across three programmatic areas as defined by Carnegie prior 1992. This focus on graduate education – and the status that went along with it – it might be argued, kept these institutions from participating in the trend where other institutions who were newer to graduate education changed their status from college to university. In other words, there was less pressure to change from college to university status in name because the change to a graduate-focused institution had already occurred and been recognized both inside and outside the institution.

More difficult to explain is the finding in Table 4 that, even after controlling for instructional expenditures, Carnegie Classification, and focus on graduate education, state appropriations were a significant positive predictor of the change to university status for public institutions. Coupled with the finding that instructional expenditures were a significant negative predictor in the same model, this finding seems unlikely. However, this finding may be explained with a greater knowledge of where the public institutions in the group were likely to be classified. For example, 23 of the 34 public institutions (residing in one of the three Carnegie Classifications) that changed their names from college to university were classified as Master's I Universities. Their focus on graduate education may have allowed for each of them to lobby for and receive greater appropriations per student than would have been the case had they focused solely on less expensive undergraduate education programs. Or, the method used in this study could

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have recognized the change in state appropriations that occurred as a result of the change from college to university status.

The study and its findings raise several questions that deserve further study. As mentioned above, this study focused on institutional characteristics, not institutional motivations. These should now come next. After all, the motivations of the institutions moving between college and university are arguably at the crux of the trend examined here. The questions underlying these motivations and what happens after the transition from college to university are very compelling. For example, what do these less selective, relatively poor institutions that are engaging in the change from college to university status believe will accompany their change in status? And, does the change in status provide these institutions with the resources – tangible or intangible – they seek? Recent research on organizational change of this kind in higher education suggests, for example, that there is a significant likelihood that this kind of change is difficult for institutions, and particularly for faculty. Studies show that, if faculty are asked, as a result of organizational change, to refocus their work habits, dissatisfaction is the likely result (Henderson and Kane, 1991; Finnegan and Gamson, 1996). An in-depth qualitative study of several of these institutions, their motivations, and the outcomes associated with their change would go a long way toward documenting and understanding this trend in higher education and determining the organizational impact of this kind of transformation on institutions, their students, and their faculty.

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